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ABSTRACT

Aired by the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) during the 1960s, "CBS Reports" proved to be one of that network's most honored efforts at television news coverage. CBS chairman, William S. Paley, based his decision to air the show on the presence of a sponsor and in response to the prospect of an open-ended Federal Communications Commission (FCC) inquiry into network operations and a critics' tempest over the departure of another CBS News Program, "See It Now." The path of "CBS Reports" serves to illustrate two points: the economics of programing in the 1950s did matter greatly to at least one network deciding for prime time news, and critics and regulators probably did influence such determinations. (HOD)

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History Division

"The Strange Birth of CBS Reports" Revisited

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"The Strange Birth of CBS Reports" Revisited

At his alma mater in May, 1959, CBS President Frank Stanton announced that the Columbia Broadcasting System planned for the fall season a new, hour-long informational program, CBS Reports. With the efficiency of the corporate men of the 1950s, Stanton's underlings at CBS distributed to opinion leaders everywhere copies of the president's address. The network's executive asserted that beginning in October, the program would run monthly. Fred W. Friendly, co-producer of the critically hailed but canceled See It Now, was named executive producer of CBS Reports.[1] Aired during the 1960s, CBS Reports proved to be one of the network's most honored efforts at television news.

Why did Stanton and his corporation give America CBS Reports? Why in May, 1959 was the series' advent indicated? Stanton's speech most likely reflected three considerations. First, CBS Television enjoyed a better financial position than a year or two earlier. That is, management could afford CBS Reports in May, 1959, it could not pay for See It Now one year earlier. Second, Columbia had been under attack for scheduling changes instituted between 1957 and 1958. And an unanticipated adversary, the long dormant Federal Communications Commission (FCC), early in 1959 launched a major inquiry into network operations. These conditions spurred Columbia executives into acting against their immediate interest to protect their long term investment from government interference.

Such decisions to telecast news programs in evening prime time have long puzzled historians of mass communications. Until very recently, most informational programming obtained low, sometimes miniscule ratings, and especially

when compared to entertainment series. Yet the national networks almost always provided some time segments for news programs.

In accounting for such enterpreneurial sacrifice, observers and historians of broadcasting have gone from the particular to the sublime. In his memoirs, Friendly saw a connection between the birth of CBS Reports and the scandals later uncovered in the presentation of many of CBS' popular quiz programs. While Stanton and others at Columbia planned CBS Reports, the fix of Dotto, Tic, Tac, Dough and other programs was under investigation. Once exposed, the fraud could do untold damage to the industry's prestige. The creation of Reports, Friendly argued, could be created to dull the knives of television's harshest critics.[2] Subsequent empirical observations, grouping all three networks and measuring prime time programming patterns, tend to confirm Friendly's point: that an increase in network non-entertainment programming actually preceded the quiz show exposes of late 1959.[3]

Nevertheless, all three networks did boost news programming soon after a House committee in October and November, 1959 publicly and conclusively proved that the quiz programs had been rigged. Suddenly, special features on President Dwight Eisenhower's overseas tours and the 1960 presidential campaign absorbed evening hours. The networks regularly scheduled informational series like NBC's Chet Huntley Reporting and ABC's Close-Up! for the great audience. "Charlie Van Doren," one wag noted, referring to a fallen star of the quiz series, "did great things for information programming."[4]

Finally, some recent scholars have tried to explain the decision for CBS Reports by diminishing that determination's actual significance. Up to twenty-five years of programming have been categorized and correlated to discover a consistent, managerial view regarding when and how much news should go on the air. One survey found that "reality" programs (news, public affairs, interview) tended to lose schedule slots to action-filled melodramas

or situation comedies, and that economic forces explained such shifts. That is, good times encouraged homogeneity in the schedules on the networks, which cut back on less profitable, less popular informational series to accrue even higher profits.[5] A more exacting linear analysis of documentary scheduling between 1950 and 1974 finds a similarly negative relationship between more money earned and more news aired.[6]

Numerous problems, however, surface in such an approach to broadcast history. A precision is gained over persuasive rhetoric. But distinctions between networks and periods tend to be obscured and in some cases, at least, at the cost of rendering violence to history itself. For example, Edward Jay Epstein's study of NBC News clearly demonstrates that the then two leaders in news coverage, NBC and Columbia, held to strikingly different philosophies concerning economic circumstance and news scheduling. NBC lacked CBS' array of popular entertainment programs, and hence, aired more news programs because its managers believed they had little other choice.[7] Then, too, economic considerations might influence a network in the 1950s and not in the 1970s. A recent study of American television in the Fifties uncovered a strong relationship between the economic imperatives of management and what came over the air.[8] Such a tie need not necessarily operate two decades later. Historians should recognize that things change, even in entertainment management, rather than stay the same, lifeless way so much the fashion of the more clumsy practitioners of social science.

If quantitative leaps prove only marginally helpful excursions, more traditional methods pose little relief, for investigations into broadcast history can be frustrating in other ways. The networks do not provide the access to archives that the State Department or retired congressmen do. Those

few who have been granted entry to the records of CBS and other chains more often uncover the timelessly worthless press release.[9]

Still, archival and other discreet evidence does exist. The FCC Records and even the papers of some congressmen include illuminating documentation. Taped memoirs -- most in the Oral History Collection of Columbia University -- include the reminiscences of Stanton and others at CBS. These materials combined with information available in published sources enable one to reconstruct at least in part the mind of the media manager of May, 1959.

That process of reconstruction is supported by old and recent theoretical formulations in journalism history. Croce, Collingwood and Butterfield all suggest that historians can better comprehend change by recreating the historical situation, to replicate, in other words, the decision-making processes of those contemplating matters later deemed of historical consequence. James Carey -- borrowing heavily from Butterfield -- has dubbed this "cultural history."[10] Ernest May, diplomatic historian, more modestly describes the method as "explaining the past by achieving empathy with the people who experienced it."[11]

Part of that understanding process is to recognize the managerial structure at CBS, to know who decided what went over the air and when. Stanton gave the CBS Reports speech and took credit for the program when talking with friends and sympathetic biographers uncomfortable with most everythink else on the Columbia schedule.[12] But few at CBS collaborate Stanton's assertion.[13] Although Stanton probably influenced the move, CBS Chairman William S. Paley, who effectively owned the network, normally dictated such scheduling decisions. His power over programming was -- in an age of the modern, decentralized corporation -- altogether remarkable, almost a throwback to an earlier epoch of industry barons meticulously managing their companies as extensions of their egos.[14] Paley, not Stanton, was in the end responsible for

CBS Reports.

The chairman's first consideration was economic. The late 1950s were a period of industry consolidation and retrenchment. Over the first ten years of network broadcasting, the chains enjoyed spectacular annual rates of increase in the sale of time to advertisers. As Columbia invested heavily in the newest medium, sponsors appeared. Between 1949 and 1954, for example, General Foods' total network television advertising budget increased from $365,696 to $9,728,000.[15] And Columbia had emerged after a frantic competition with NBC the leading seller of TV time.[16] By late 1957, however, rates of growth had begun to taper off and containing production costs, which continued to rise, became paramount. This tendency worsened with the 1957-58 recession which, despite industry disclaimers, did cut into time sales. "The soft economy," an FCC interviewer of CBS executives, "has given the advertisers a better position to bargain from."[17] The 20 or 40 percent annual time sale increments dropped to 5 or 7 percent ones. CBS did not lose its leadership in ratings and revenues, but its growth rates had declined. Certain luxuries had to go.[18]

Extravagance was located in the CBS News Division. For years, Columbia had boosted its informational service and even placed See It Now, despite low ratings,[19] in evening prime time. But potential revenues could no longer be sacrificed to the goodwill of opinion leaders liking Edward R. Murrow and his group of radio and video reporters. Although Murrow's admirers were quick to view his departure as some sort of punishment for his style of reportage, other individuals and programs (mainly on radio or Sunday afternoons) suffered with the economy drive. Between 1957 and 1958, CBS dropped news programs, news staff and ended See It Now.[20] "This economy drive in CBS has cut pretty deep," Eric Sevareid wrote Paul Niven in February, 1958. "It's murder around here," he informed Charles Collingwood, "a lot of firings with other jobs hard

to get."[21]

Paley's budget drive reflected two, seemingly contradictory tendencies in television economics. First, as already noted, the 1957-58 recession somewhat abated advertiser demand. Second, those underwriters still willing to buy time were more likely to insist, successfully, on maximum ratings. A sellers' market had become a buyers' auction.[22] Put differently, CBS could maintain or increase profits with Beat the Clock, a quiz program; retaining See It Now or You Are There would only have betrayed the company's static state.

Ironically, CBS dispanded some news operations as NBC expanded its news division. From late 1957, NBC's new television programmer, Robert Kintner, boosted the lagging NBC News Division. But NBC's earlier prestige in TV's "Golden Age" had not come from news but innovative entertainment programming, the "spectacular" and dramatic anthology. These program forms Kintner discarded between 1957 and 1958 in favor of half-hour westerns.[23] NBC, moreover, was a subsidiary of RCA. Although expected to earn money -- Kintner's ruthless pursuit of popular entertainment evidenced this mandate -- NBC's managers could still falter and have their company subsidized by RCA's other, more profitable groups. In the late 1950s, NBC accounted for between 20 and 30 percent of RCA's revenues. CBS depended far more on earnings accrued in broadcasting.[24]

Partly for that relative dependency, CBS' managers felt far more vulnerable to governmental criticism. The network's "owned and operated" TV and radio licenses were the Columbia Broadcasting Systems' main profit centers and most vulnerable to FCC edicts. New legislation or regulation could strike harder at CBS than NBC.

How justifiably might Columbia worry about displeasing the federal government? The FCC on one level posed no threat. Eisenhower, by naming

mainly placid non-entities commissioners, had denied the agency much purpose; conflict of interest scandal tinged the agency early in 1958. Congress, in turn, had imposed rigid, procedural impediments delaying the promulgation of new rules. Gone was the prospect -- alive in the late New Deal -- of the FCC's reducing the networks' power and profitability.[25] However, the Commission, prodded by Congress, had been inquiring into a variety of network practices. In October, 1957, a special FCC Office of Network Study (ONS) headed by Dean Roscoe L. Barrow of the University of Cincinnati Law School recommended a series of changes to reduce the power of each network.[26] The FCC did nothing but delay, with some commissioners, a critic charged, not even reading the Barrow Report.[27] Two congressional committees in 1956 had studied the possibility of legislating against the networks, but again, nothing happened.[28]

Thus CBS had only the invisible hand to fear. A network normally sensitive to the vicissitudes of broadcast regulators could be in 1958 insensitive to them. Instead, the market place mandated the schedule. And a buyers' market knocked the news out of CBS' evening prime time.

That equilibrium changed, however, in early 1959, with the first shock involving the FCC. The Commission unexpectedly in February voted to reopen its network inquiry. Although loathe to act against the industry, Eisenhower's FCC chairman, John C. Doerfer, had little choice. After initially ignoring Barrow's recommendations, Doerfer was informed by the Justice Department that the FCC had to act. Since late 1953, the Antitrust Division had been investigating the trade practices of the television industry.[29] Justice had uncovered many improprieties by the networks in their dealings with program producers and affiliated stations. Victor Hansen, Antitrust Division chief, believed that Doerfer and the FCC must pursue the inquiry. The FCC and not Justice

was best equipped to establish if the infractions truly conflicted with the public interest. After helping to dismember the film industry with the Paramount case of 1948, the Antitrust Section hesitated rigidly enforcing antitrust dictums that effectively crippled industries. Doerfer agreed to open a formal, en banc proceeding into the networks' programming and affiliate relations.[30]

What was the response of Columbia's management to the FCC's sudden concern about oligopolistic operations? The Commissioners' vote and its announcement came before Stanton's Columbus address. Although the tie connecting Doerfer's action and Stanton's speech may be little more than coincidental, no network courted official Washington more assiduously than CBS did. None, as noted above, had so much to lose with the creation of punitive regulations.[31]

More certain is the economic motive: after some sluggishness, advertiser demand for television time finally picked up in early 1959 and sacrifices of time that could not be made in 1958 appeared reasonable a year later. Over 1958, Columbia's time sales had lagged well behind NBC's in their rate of increase. Although well ahead of its major rival in total sales, CBS was actually lagging in terms of expanding sales. Into early 1959, however, demand for time on CBS programs began to grow at about the same level as at NBC and passed pre-recession growth levels. It is worth pointing out, however, that CBS management waited until after that trend was assured, and virtually all of the evening schedule for the 1959-60 was sold to time-buyers in April,[32] before announcing CBS Reports' irregular debut.

For Columbia's potential new documentary, also, a sponsor was to be had. One Saturday morning, the very young son of Peter G. Peterson, vice president of Bell and Howell, was (probably accidentally) watching a documentary, The Face of Red China. Wandering into the TV room, Peterson was transfixed by the program and the prospect of Bell & Howell sponsoring a similar one

regularly in the evening. Soon thereafter, in March, 1959, Peterson sought out Stanton to indicate that B&H would underwrite such a series if Columbia would produce one.[33]

Peterson's largesse coincided with one other factor leading CBS' managers to create CBS Reports: the hailstorm of criticism that greeted the network with the canceling of See It Now. Murrow's program had never commanded good ratings and, indeed, some CBS affiliates refused to carry or "clear" the program.[34] Yet Murrow, both for See It Now and his World War II radio work, enjoyed the respect of many influential eastern opinion leaders. He was without peer in early TV news.[35] And it was who watched See It Now that mattered far more than how many, for the end of See It Now evoked a powerful outcry. John Crosby, one of the nation's most read TV critics,[36] decried CBS' move. "There have been some dull See It Now shows and some have been better than others," he wrote in July, 1958. "But it is by every criterion, television's most brilliant, most decorated, most imaginative, most courageous, and most important program. The fact that CBS cannot afford it but can afford Beat the Clock is shocking."[37] That month, as well, Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, a leading candidate for the 1960 Democratic presidential nomination, complained to CBS Television President and fellow Democrat Louis Cowan, "We should not be satisfied with the existing level of accomplishment [in television]. I note, for example, that CBS is dropping its most consistently outstanding public affairs program, See It Now."[38] In September, Senator Warren Magnuson wrote Stanton to determine if CBS were planning further reductions in public service programming. Magnuson chaired the Senate committee that oversaw broadcasting and its regulation.[39]

Such criticisms were heard at CBS. Early in October, 1958, ONS representatives continuing their network inquiry interviewed CBS TV President Cowan

and others in New York. A bitter CBS News chief Sig Mickelson complained about Crosby and others with comment, "The trade press hopped on the bandwagon to point out the demise of See It Now." More calmly, Cowan assured the FCC representatives that Murrow remained a salaried CBS commentator, likely to return to the airwaves. "The demise of See It Now like the death of Mark Twain," Cowan remarked, "has been greatly exaggerated."[40]

Nevertheless, if Murrow were to be brought back to prime time, he hardly appeared aware of the fact later that month when he openly criticized Columbia's priorities. Before the Radio and Television News Directors' Association, Murrow saw all of television in deep trouble. Standards of public service had been surrendered, leaving him "seized with fear" and the "nation in mortal danger." Americans were not being informed by television.[41]

To Murrow, America's Cold War with the Soviet Union made CBS' new schedule all the more alarming. "This nation," he said, "is now in competition with malignant forces of evil who are using every instrument at their command to empty the minds of their subjects." Without TV news programming, "we are protecting the mind of the American public from any real contact with the menancing world that squeezes in upon us."[42]

Murrow's address kept the controversy over his program alive. The Reporter, a liberal journal of no little influence, reprinted the speech, while mass circulation magazines ranging from Time to TV Guide endorsed Murrow's remarks, with the latter also eventually reprinting the text. Stanton privately tried to quiet some like Magnuson by showing no decline in the network's budget for news.[43] But no informational program replaced See It Now in evening prime time.[44]

Into early 1959, Murrow's arguments were taken up by others. CBS news correspondents Eric Sevaried and Martin Agronsky, in a televised

interview, bewailed the end of many of their network's programs while regretting that the nightly newscast ran only fifteen minutes.[45] Murrow's Cold War imagery was taken up by John Fischer, editor of Harper's, who in March insisted that television "must give people the information they need to make intelligent and responsible decisions about both domestic and foreign problems and the kinds of problems which have now become so urgent to the survival of the whole country."[46] Fischer's counterpart at Saturday Review, Norman Cousins, five weeks later declared, "The Public Still Owns the Air" and noted a "diminishing" program service of less news and information. "In television, sponsored entertainment more than dominates, it overwhelms," Cousins wrote. "Informational television has never known anything finer than See It Now, produced by Edward R. Murrow and Fred W. Friendly. See It Now cannot now be seen; it has been backed off the air by commercial entertainment."[47]

Through this discussion, several themes emerged. First, none of Columbia's critics denied that news programs in the late 1950s obtained poor or comparatively low ratings.[48] Second, with the exception of a few Old Guard Republicans like John W. Bricker[49] and a few radical Menckens like William Appleman Williams, none criticized the biases or content of network news programs.[50] Instead, their very presence on the schedule pleased the detractors of the home screen.[51] Virtually all saw carrying news programs as a sort of glorious burden, and an obligation to a nation beset by Cold War challenges unresolved by the likes of Bart Maverick or Kookie Kookson.

Thus William S. Paley found himself in early 1959 as he weighed the forthcoming Columbia schedule. However poor a news program's audience share, a sponsor was ready, thanks to the fancy or dialing error of Peter Peterson's little boy. Moreover, a news program might placate those few if influential

fans of Edward R. Murrow and news programming: congressmen, magazin and newspaper critics. Perhaps even the FCC's investigators of the network practices might be won over.

Still, Friendly and others have raised another factor: the budding scandal over the fix of the popular quiz shows. Dotto, Twenty-One and other popular programs of the 1955-58 seasons, offered as legitimate contests of skill and memory, were found in late 1959 to have been rigged by their producers. Once the shows were revealed to be frauds, CBS faced a public relations battle of gigantic proportions. To offset that prospect, Paley and others created CBS Reports. "The specter of the quiz scandal," Friendly writes, "overshadowed everything."[52]

Friendly's argument does not survive serious scrutiny. Paley approved CBS Reports sometime before Stanton's May, 1959 Ohio State address, or more than six months before the quiz fix was exposed. It is by no means certain that upper management knew that early in the year of the deceits. Although certain magazines had since April, 1957 been carrying stories implying fraud,[53] Stanton and others had convinced themselves that such features were the sour grapes of losing contestants and opportunistic print media critics.[54] A New York county grand jury then looking into the quiz programs offered one valid basis for discomfort. Yet predicting much public outcry from any subsequent indictments, even if the executives did anticipate them, was difficult. Most of the programs in question had already left the air by early 1959 because of declining ratings.[55] Then, too, had the leaders of CBS and NBC actually been aware of the riggings, as Friendly asserts they were, more than CBS Reports would have been announced in May. Cowan would have been dismissed as president of CBS-TV since he had originally produced The $64,000 Question, one of the quizzes in question. Although denying to his death that

any improper staging occurred while he produced the program, Cowan did eventually lose his position once the scandal was exposed.[56] Nor would NBC have continued until November to retain as a Today Show host, Charles Van Doren, a big winner on Twenty-One, who had been coached throughout his performance. And NBC President Kintner would not later have demanded that Van Doren, whom he presumed to be unsoiled by the scandal, testify to his innocence in November, when his admission of culpability caused an uproar.[57]

Friendly's description of CBS Reports' "strange birth" notwithstanding, the actual chronology fits a different grouping of events and pressures. In July, 1958, CBS canceled See It Now and a storm of protests ensued. In October, 1958, CBS Television President Cowan assured FCC staff members that Columbia intended to bring back into prime time a documentary, only in a different form. In March, 1959, Peterson of Bell and Howell approached Stanton about Bell's sponsoring such a documentary. One month later, the FCC announced a new inquiry into many aspects of network operations, with the prospect, however remote, of new and punitive network regulations. Leading opinion leaders through this period were deploring the fate of Murrow and See It Now, and insisting that the television industry revive a lost form of the Golden Age. Early in May, with CBS' time sales promising for the 1959-60 season, Stanton visited Ohio State to announce the fall premiere of CBS Reports.

The birth of CBS Reports, then, owed little to a $64,000 question and most everything to other circumstances. The presence of a sponsor, the prospect of an open-ended FCC inquiry, and a critics' tempest over the departure of See It Now, presented William Paley with scarcely any other option. Stanton went to Columbus in May and CBS Reports began on a monthly basis in October. In January, 1961, Columbia commenced to air the program weekly and over the decade, CBS Reports garnered Emmys and Peabody awards.[58]

The path of CBS Reports serves to answer certain questions. First, the economics of networking in the 1950s did matter greatly to at least one chain deciding for prime time news. Second, critics and regulators probably did influence such determinations.

Later important moments in broadcast history might be explored in this fashion. The expansion of the CBS and NBC evening newscasts from 15 to 30 minutes, for example, or the creation of 60 Minutes, which aborted the documentary form, the recent success of ABC News, all may owe something to shifting climates of opinion and managerial imperatives. Rather than derive generalizations that barely inform, historians of broadcast news might embark on such case studies that seek to recreate the "culture" of the moment that can be decisive agents of change. "The business of history," one historian of France recently noted, is "to grapple with dynamics of causation."[59]

NOTES

1. Cleveland Press, 9 May 1959; Broadcasting, (11 May 1959), p. 50; "The Reminiscences of Frank Stanton," (1968), Oral History Collection of Columbia University (hereafter COHC), pp. 186-88.

2. Fred W. Friendly, Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control (New York, 1967), p. 101. Less helpful are Gary Paul Gates, Air Time: The Inside Story of CBS News (New York, 1978); Sig Mickelson, The Electric Mirror: Politics in the Age of Television (New York, 1972); William S. Paley, As It Happened: A Memoir (Garden City, 1979); Robert Metz, CBS: Reflections in a Bloodshot Eye (Chicago, 1975).

3. Robert Lee Bailey, "Examination of Prime Time Network Television Special Programs," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1967, pp. 42, 75.

4. Thomas B. Morgan, "Crisis, Conflict and Change in TV News," Look, (7 November 1961), p. 51. See also William Small, To Kill a Messenger: Television News and the Real World (New York, 1979), p. 19; Harold Mehling, The Great Time Killer (Cleveland, 1962), p. 37; Marie Torre, Don't Quote Me (Garden City, 1965), pp. 180, 182, 217-18.

5. Joseph R. Dominick and Millard C. Pearce, "Trends in Network Prime-Time Programming," Journal of Communication, 26 (Winter, 1976), pp. 79-80.

6. Raymond L. Carroll, "Economic Influences in Commercial Network Scheduling," Journal of Broadcasting, 23 (Fall, 1979), p. 423 and passim.

7. Edward Jay Epstein, News from Nowhere: Television and the News (New York, 1973).

8. James L. Baughman, "The Dream of an 'All-American Elite': Network Television in the Golden Age, 1948-1958," paper, annual meeting, Organization of American Historians, 3 April 1981. Cf. David Paul Nord, "An Economic

Perspective on Formula in Popular Culture," Journal of American Culture, 3 (Spring, 1980): 17-28.

9. David Holbrook Culbert, News for Everyman: Radio and Foreign Affairs (Westport, Conn., 1976), pp. 215-16.

10. James W. Carey, "The Problem of Journalism History," Journalism History, 1 (Spring, 1974): 3-5, 27. Carey admits to borrowing the expression "Whig" history from Butterfield; his alternative view is also from Butterfield, which he does not acknowledge. See Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History (1931, New York, 1965), especially ch. 5.

11. Ernest R. May, The Making of the Monroe Doctrine (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), pp. 259-60.

12. Stanton, COHC (1968), pp. 186-87. Stanton similarly credits himself with the airing of Playhouse 90, one of Columbia's most honored programs of the late 1950s.

13. Notes of interview with Richard Jencks, n.d., Martin Mayer MSS., Columbia University, Box 68, provide one of the few indications that Stanton played a role in programming.

14. On Paley's dominance, see Stanton, COHC (1968), pp. 185, 200; unabridged notes of interview with officers of CBS, 6-9 October 1958, p. 30, Office of Network Study (hereafter, ONS), FCC MSS., GSA Invoice No. 72-A-1986, Box 16; interview with Paley, The Today Show, 2 May 1979; Peter W. Bernstein, "C.B.S. Fights To Regain the Title," Fortune, (29 January 1979), p. 60; notes of interview with Michael Dann, n.d., Mayer MSS., Box 68.

15. Printer's Ink, (24 March 1950), p. 70, (30 May 1955), p. 36.

16. CBS memorandum, George Bristol to all TV network salesmen, 14 February 1957, copy in NBC MSS., State Historical Society of Wisconsin (hereafter, SHSW), Box 140; Forbes, (1 October 1956), p. 16; Sponsor, (11 April 1959), p. 45.

17. Unabridged notes of interview with CBS officers, 6-9 October 1958, pp. 52-53; handwritten notes of interview with CBS officers, 6-9 October 1958, p. 20, ONS, FCC MSS., GSA Invoice No. 72-A-1986, Box 15; Television Age, (26 January 1959), p. 23. Cf. Harold G. Vatter, The U.S. Economy in the 1950's (New York, 1963), pp. 115-20.

18. Figures are for all four networks. Broadcasting Yearbook 1964 (Washington, 1964), p. 25. See also Business Week, (29 June 1957), p. 108, (31 January 1959), pp. 42-43; Editor and Publisher, (7 March 1959), p. 26; Richard Austin Smith, "TV: The Light That Failed," Fortune, 58 (December, 1958), pp. 79-80.

19. Stanley Frank, "Television's Desparate Numbers Game," Saturday Evening Post, (9 December 1957), p. 149.

20. Alexander Kendrick, Prime Time: The Life of Edward R. Murrow (Boston, 1969), p. 381; Friendly, pp. 75-76; David Halberstam, "CBS: The Power and the Profits," Atlantic, 237 (January, 1976), p. 79; Variety, 9 July 1958, p. 23; Broadcasting, (3 February 1958), p. 54.

21. Sevareid to Niven, Sevareid to Collingwood, 24 February 1958, Sevareid MSS., Library of Congress, Box C-2.

22. Testimony of two advertising executives in Docket 12782, vol. 2, Proceedings, vol. 5, p. 620, vol. 6, pp. 767, 768, Commission Dockets Room.

23. On Kintner, see Bob Stahl, "Five Who Are Taking a Giant Step at NBC," TV Guide, (10 October 1959), p. 10; David Levy, The Chameleons (New York, 1964), especially pp. 11, 40-41, 48; unabridged notes of interview with NBC officers, 27-28 October 1958, p. 51, ONS, FCC MSS., GSA Invoice No. 72-A-1986, Box 12; William L. Shirer to Morris L. Ernst, 9 April 1959, Ernst MSS., Western Humanities Library, University of Texas, Box 542.

24. Fortune, 48 (July, 1953), pp. 80, 164. The CBS and RCA annual reports for the 1950s were also consulted.

25. James L. Baughman, "Warriors in the Wasteland: The Federal Communications Commission and American Television, 1958-1967," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1981, ch. 1; TRB, "The Weakest Sister," New Republic, 141 (19 October 1959), p. 2; David Frier, Conflict-of-Interest in the Eisenhower Administration (Ames, 1969), chs. 11-13; Clifford J. Durr, "The Forgotten Client of the Agencies," New Republic, 138 (30 June 1958): 8-9.

26. Docket 12285, Proceedings, vols. 21-23, pp. 3486-945, FCC MSS., GSA Invoice No. 72-A-1986, Box 8; U.S. House, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, Network Broadcasting, Report No. 1297, 85th Congress, 2d. sess., 1958; Roscoe L. Barrow, "Anti-trust and the Regulated Industry: Promoting Competition in Broadcasting," Duke Law Journal, (Spring, 1964): 282-306; Lucille Sheppard Keyes, "The Recommendations of the Network Study Staff," George Washington Law Review, 27 (January, 1959): 303-26; CBS Annual Report 1957, p. 11; Broadcasting, (7 October 1957), pp. 31-36, 39, 92, 94-106.

27. Transcript of interview with Bernard Schwartz, WMCA, 8 February 1960, copy in Oren Harris MSS., University of Arkansas, Group 3, Box 10-4-29.

28. John Daly to Robert Kintner, 27 June 1956, Daly MSS., SHSW, Box 11.

29. Victor Hansen, address, 18 April 1957, copy in Emanuel Celler MSS., Library of Congress, Box 240.

30. Hansen to Doerfer, 11 March 1958, 31 March 1958, Doerfer to Hansen, 7 May 1958, Hansen to Doerfer, 2 October 1958, 31 October 1958, Harold G. Cogwill to Commission, 6 February 1959, copies in Newton N. Minow MSS., SHSW, Box 26; Broadcasting, (9 June 1958), p. 31; FCC order, 27 February 1959, announced 10 April 1959; Broadcasting, (27 April 1959), pp. 65-66; Advertising Age, (2 March 1959), pp. 1, 97.

31. Observers in the late 1970s tended to dismiss the FCC as a waste of office space with little influence on the networks. In early 1959, however,

the Commission was by no means so easily disregarded, no matter how ineffectual at the moment the Eisenhower majority of commissioners appeared to be. Only sixteen years earlier, one network had been split up and all the chains were subject to new, onerous regulations because of the 1941 Chain Broadcasting Rules. The network manager of 1959, then, had little reason to forecast continued ineffectiveness -- which has essentially been the case -- through the 1960s and 1970s, while possessing many memories of earlier and hard regulatory times.

32. In data released just prior to Stanton's speech, Columbia's February, 1959 billings showed a 7.2 percent increase over February, 1958; NBC enjoyed a 7.5 percent rise over the February, 1958 billings. Sponsor, (25 April 1959), p. 17. In contrast, the December 1957 and 1958 comparisons, typical for the 1958 year, had been the least encouraging to Columbia: ABC, + 24.0 percent, NBC, + 11.3 percent, CBS, + 3.6 percent; average, + 9.7 percent. Advertising Age, (23 February 1959), p. 186.

33. See Peterson's testimony in Docket 12782, vol. 16, Proc., vol. 45, pp. 6803-804, and Robert Lewis Shayon, "Mr. Percy's Touch for Television," Saturday Review, 43 (8 October 1960), p. 61.

34. Exhibit 51 in Docket 12782, vol. B, lists the program's station clearances for February, 1954. Of CBS' affiliates, 33 percent did not carry See It Now the week of 2 February 1954 compared to 94 percent taking Doug Edwards and the News.

35. James L. Baughman, "See It Now and Television's Golden Age, 1951-58," Journal of American Culture (forthcoming); John Crosby, "It Was New and We Were Very Innocent," TV Guide, (22 September 1973), p. 8; William L. Rivers, "The Correspondents After 25 Years," Columbia Journalism Review, 1 (Spring, 1962), p. 9.

36. Unpublished analysis of television critics by Patrick McGrady, October, 1958, Fund for the Republic MSS., Princeton University, Box 63.

37. New York Herald Tribune, 11 July 1958.

38. Kennedy to Cowan, 16 July 1958, Theodore C. Sorensen MSS., John F. Kennedy Library, Box 3.

39. Frank Stanton to Magnuson, 3 December 1958, copy in FCC MSS., GSA Invoice No. 72-A-1986, Box 13.

40. Handwritten notes of meeting with CBS officers, ONS, 7 October 1958, pp. 42, 43.

41. Text of address in Murrow MSS., Tufts University, Box 7-B-25.

42. Ibid. See also Murrow to Leon Linn, 16 January 1959, ibid., Box 2-B-8; interview in London Daily Mail, c. November 1958, clipping in ibid., Box 2-B-4; Pete Martin, "I Call on Edward R. Murrow," Saturday Evening Post, (18 January 1959), p. 78.

43. Stanton to Magnuson, 3 December 1958.

44. Sponsor, (11 April 1959), pp. 46-47, lists the weekly schedule for April and early May.

45. Fund for the Republic interview, 29 January 1959, over WGBH, Boston, reprinted in Harry J. Skornia and Jack William Kitson, eds., Problems and Controversies in Television and Radio (Palo Alto, 1968), pp. 364-74; Editor and Publisher, (7 February 1959), p. 56.

46. CBS News, "Is American Journalism Meeting Its Responsibilities?" Great Challenges, 28 March 1959, transcript, p. 2, copy in FCC MSS., GSA Invoice No. 72-A-1986, Box 15.

47. Cousins, "The People Still Own the Air," Saturday Review, 42 (9 May 1959), p. 20.

48. Notes of interview with NBC officers, 28-29 October 1958, p. 6, ONS, FCC MSS., GSA Invoice No. 72-A-1986, Box 11; Stanley Frank, p. 149; Docket 12782, vol. 2, Proc., vol. 5, pp. 693-94.

49. New York Times, 7 April 1954, 5 February 1955, Chicago Tribune, 30 April 1955; Donald R. Matthews, U.S. Senators and Their World (Chapel Hill, 1960, paperback edition), p. 212. Cf. Daniel Frederick Hahn, "The Far Right Opposition to the Mass Media," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1968.

50. Williams to Murrow, 4 February 1959, Murrow MSS., Box 2-C-47.

51. One exception was Murrow's interview program, Person-to-Person, which received some biting criticisms. John Lardner, "The Perils of Frivolity," New Yorker, 33 (11 January 1958): 104-06; Gilbert Seldes, "Mr. Ernst Objects," Saturday Review, 42 (8 March 1958): 44-45.

52. Friendly, p. 101. David Halberstam, The Powers That Be (New York, 1979), p. 155, rather haphazardly borrows from Friendly's analysis but refers to the "1956" quiz show scandals.

53. Time, (22 April 1957), pp. 78, 80, 82; Look, (20 August 1957), pp. 45-47. Advertising executive Robert Foreman's novel, The Hot Half Hour (New York, 1958), also suggested a rigged affair while David Levy's roman a clef about NBC suggests Kintner and others knew, The Chameleons, p. 90.

54. "The Reminiscences of Frank Stanton," (1978), COHC, pp. 25-26; Broadcasting, (29 September 1958), p. 48; Television Digest, (special supplement) (21 June 1958), "The Reminiscences of Louis Cowan," (1967), COHC, p. 194; James Kent Anderson, "Fraudulence in Television: The History and Implications of the Quiz Show Scandals, 1955-1960," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1975, pp. 127, 176-77.

55. Broadcasting, (29 September 1958), p. 48; Anderson, pp. 162, 167, 175.

56. Cowan, COHC, p. 189; Anderson, pp. 25, 220.

57. Cowan, COHC, p. 193; House, Commerce Committee, Investigation of Television Quiz Shows, Hearings, 86th Congress, 1st. sess., 1959, pp. 624-30; Newsweek, (9 November 1959), pp. 69-70; Columbus Dispatch, 8 November 1959; Hans J. Morgenthau, "Reaction to the Van Doren Reaction," New York Times Magazine, (22 November 1959), p. 106; Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade -- and after: America, 1945-1960 (New York, 1960), pp. 316-24; Richard S. Tedlow, "Intellect on Television: The Quiz Show Scandals of the 1950s," American Scholar, 28 (Fall, 1976): 483-95; Washington Star, 8 November 1959; Renata Adler, "Reflections on Political Scandal," New York Review of Books, 24 (8 December 1977), p. 20.

58. For a less cheery view of CBS Reports in the 1960s, see New York Times, 19 June 1966.

59. Christopher H. Johnson, review of French Peasants in Revolt: The Insurrection of 1851, by Ted W. Margadant, American Historical Review, 86 (February, 1981): 147.